

CRIBB<S> NOTE – FEBRUARY 8, 2009

People are watching to see what will happen next. For the past couple of weeks, eyes have been trained on President Barack Obama and his new administration. Among the observers are those who are hoping he will succeed in making life better for so many people who are suffering. They want him to fix the economy, create new jobs, improve international relations, and bring civility to Congress.

Across the nation and around the world people are praying, wishing, and cheering him on to do a great job, perhaps, even, to be a miracle worker. They have placed their hopes in his leadership.

On the other hand, there is another group of people who are paying very close attention to every detail of his decision-making. At every turn, they are looking for a misstep, a mistake, something they can accuse him of doing that exposes his vulnerability and imperfection. There are some people who wish he will fail, fall flat on his face, and show his human frailty.

In these days, President Obama needs to know the true source of his strength. He needs to have time to go into that quiet place and know the ever-present hope that is God. All of us need to have moments when we turn in solemn reverence to God.

No matter what we are experiencing or what is taking place around us, we need to know God is always with us. God is the Source of our strength.

When Jesus walked into the home of Simon, a fisherman whom he had called to be one of his disciples, he encountered Simon's mother-in-law sick in bed. Jesus was told of her condition. The story indicates he said nothing. Instead, he simply stood beside her bed, touched her hand, and raised her up. Her fever was broken, her strength was renewed, and she got up to serve the guests in her house.

Jesus came into the world as a living testament of God's love. He was present with people who had great needs. He had compassion for the sick, lame, hungry, and those who were dead. Jesus walked with the lonely and invited the outcast to follow him. He pitied the broken-hearted and elevated the downtrodden.

There were people who watched Jesus' every move. They wanted to catch him in a compromising situation. They desired to bring him down and destroy his reputation. Although Jesus dedicated his life to serving others and putting his life at risk for the salvation of the world, he gathered a crowd who saw nothing good in what he was doing. He knew the cost of his purpose and he persisted; he persevered.

Many of us are praying for President Obama. We are praying for his safety and his success. We are praying for real change to come over the people of

America that will make us humble and more human. Our prayers are offered to God who is the Source of our strength. But we do not just pray. We commit ourselves to share responsibility for the changes we desire.

God created human beings with intelligence and great capabilities. People were made to revere God; to be faithful and obedient unto God. Jesus came to remind us of what God expects of us: 'to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul; and to love one another as we love ourselves.'

As the body of Christ, the Church is placed in society to provide an alternative presence to the naysayer and cynic who seeks to discourage. The church stands in solidarity with the poor, polarized, and puny souls who need to re-discover the Source of their strength. A gentle touch is sufficient to lift up the spirit of someone who is feeling down. Will we do that? Do we know the Source of our strength?

-Pastor Art Cribbs